

The Texas Constitution

Article 14 - PUBLIC LANDS AND LAND OFFICE

Section 1 - GENERAL LAND OFFICE

There shall be one General Land Office in the State, which shall be at the seat of government, where all land titles which have emanated or may hereafter emanate from the State shall be registered, except those titles the registration of which may be prohibited by this Constitution. It shall be the duty of the Legislature at the earliest practicable time to make the Land Office self sustaining, and from time to time the Legislature may establish such subordinate offices as may be deemed necessary.

Article 7 - EDUCATION

Section 2 - PERPETUAL SCHOOL FUND

All funds, lands and other property heretofore set apart and appropriated for the support of public schools; all the alternate sections of land reserved by the State out of grants heretofore made or that may hereafter be made to railroads or other corporations of any nature whatsoever; one half of the public domain of the State; and all sums of money that may come to the State from the sale of any portion of the same, shall constitute a perpetual public school fund.

Article 7 - EDUCATION

Section 4 - SALE OF LANDS; INVESTMENT OF PROCEEDS

The lands herein set apart to the Public Free School fund, shall be sold under such regulations, at such times, and on such terms as may be prescribed by law; and the Legislature shall not have power to grant any relief to purchasers thereof. The proceeds of such sales must be used to acquire other land for the Public Free School fund as provided by law or the proceeds shall be invested by the comptroller of public accounts, as may be directed by the Board of Education herein provided for, in the bonds of the United States, the State of Texas, or counties in said State, or in such other securities, and under such restrictions as may be prescribed by law; and the State shall be responsible for all investments. (Amended Aug. 14, 1883, Nov. 5, 1985, and Nov. 7, 1995.)

Article 7 - EDUCATION

Section 5 - PERMANENT SCHOOL FUND; AVAILABLE SCHOOL FUND; USE OF FUNDS; DISTRIBUTION OF AVAILABLE SCHOOL FUND

(a) The permanent school fund consists of all land appropriated for public schools by this constitution or the other laws of this state, other properties belonging to the permanent school fund, and all revenue derived from the land or other properties. The available school fund consists of the distributions made to it from the total return on all investment assets of the permanent school fund, the taxes authorized by this constitution or general law to be part of the available school fund, and appropriations made to the available school fund by the legislature. The total amount distributed from the permanent school fund to the available school fund:

(1) in each year of a state fiscal biennium must be an amount that is not more than six percent of the average of the market value of the permanent school fund, excluding real property belonging to the fund that is managed, sold, or acquired under Section 4 of this article, on the last day of each of the 16 state fiscal quarters preceding the regular session of the legislature that begins before that state fiscal biennium, in accordance with the rate adopted by:

(A) a vote of two-thirds of the total membership of the State Board of Education, taken before the regular session of the legislature convenes; or

(B) the legislature by general law or appropriation, if the State Board of Education does not adopt a rate as provided by Paragraph (A) of this subdivision; and

(2) over the 10-year period consisting of the current state fiscal year and the nine preceding state fiscal years may not exceed the total return on all investment assets of the permanent school fund over the same 10-year period.

(b) The expenses of managing permanent school fund land and investments shall be paid by appropriation from the permanent school fund.

(c) The available school fund shall be applied annually to the support of the public free schools. Except as provided by this section, the legislature may not enact a law appropriating any part of the permanent school fund or available school fund to any other purpose. The permanent school fund and the available school fund may not be appropriated to or used for the support of any sectarian school. The available school fund shall be distributed to the several counties according to their scholastic population and applied in the manner provided by law.

(d) The legislature by law may provide for using the permanent school fund to guarantee bonds issued by school districts or by the state for the purpose of making loans to or purchasing the bonds of school districts for the purpose of acquisition, construction, or improvement of instructional facilities including all furnishings thereto. If any payment is required to be made by the permanent school fund as a result of its guarantee of bonds issued by the state, an amount equal to this payment shall be immediately paid by the state from the treasury to the permanent school fund. An amount owed by the state to the permanent school fund under this section shall be a general obligation of the state until paid. The amount of bonds authorized hereunder shall not exceed \$750 million or a higher amount authorized by a two-thirds record vote of both houses of the legislature. If

the proceeds of bonds issued by the state are used to provide a loan to a school district and the district becomes delinquent on the loan payments, the amount of the delinquent payments shall be offset against state aid to which the district is otherwise entitled.

(e) The legislature may appropriate part of the available school fund for administration of a bond guarantee program established under this section.

(f) Notwithstanding any other provision of this constitution, in managing the assets of the permanent school fund, the State Board of Education may acquire, exchange, sell, supervise, manage, or retain, through procedures and subject to restrictions it establishes and in amounts it considers appropriate, any kind of investment, including investments in the Texas growth fund created by Article XVI, Section 70, of this constitution, that persons of ordinary prudence, discretion, and intelligence, exercising the judgment and care under the circumstances then prevailing, acquire or retain for their own account in the management of their affairs, not in regard to speculation but in regard to the permanent disposition of their funds, considering the probable income as well as the probable safety of their capital.

(g) Notwithstanding Subsection (a) of this section, the total amount distributed from the permanent school fund to the available school fund for the state fiscal years beginning September 1, 2003, and September 1, 2004, must be an amount equal to 4.5 percent of the average of the market value of the permanent school fund, excluding real property belonging to the fund that is managed, sold, or acquired under Section 4 of this article, on the last day of each of the 16 state fiscal quarters preceding the regular session of the 78th Legislature.

(h) Subsection (g) of this section and this subsection expire December 1, 2006.

(Amended Aug. 11, 1891, and Nov. 3, 1964; Subsec. (a) amended and (b) and (c) added Nov. 8, 1983; Subsec. (d) added Nov. 8, 1988; Subsec. (b) amended Nov. 7, 1989; Subsec. (a) amended, a new (b) added, a portion of (a) redesignated as (c), former (b) and (c) amended, former (b)-(d) redesignated as (d)-(f), and (g) and (h) added Sept. 13, 2003.)

Article 7 - EDUCATION

Section 6 - COUNTY SCHOOL LANDS; PROCEEDS OF SALES; INVESTMENT; AVAILABLE SCHOOL FUND

All lands heretofore, or hereafter granted to the several counties of this State for educational purposes, are of right the property of said counties respectively, to which they were granted, and title thereto is vested in said counties, and no adverse possession or limitation shall ever be available against the title of any county. Each county may sell or dispose of its lands in whole or in part, in manner to be provided by the Commissioners Court of the county. Said lands, and the proceeds thereof, when sold, shall be held by said counties alone as a trust for the benefit of public schools therein; said proceeds to be invested in bonds of the United States, the State of Texas, or counties in said State, or in such other securities, and under such restrictions as may be prescribed by law; and the counties shall be responsible for all investments; the interest thereon, and other revenue, except the principal shall be available fund. (Amended Aug. 14, 1883, and Nov. 6, 2001.)

TEMPORARY TRANSITION PROVISION

Article 7 - EDUCATION

Section 6b - REDUCTION OF COUNTY PERMANENT SCHOOL FUND; DISTRIBUTION

Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 6, Article VII, Constitution of the State of Texas, any county, acting through the commissioners court, may reduce the county permanent school fund of that county and may distribute the amount of the reduction to the independent and common school districts of the county on a per scholastic basis to be used solely for the purpose of reducing bonded indebtedness of those districts or for making permanent improvements. The commissioners court shall, however, retain a sufficient amount of the corpus of the county permanent school fund to pay ad valorem taxes on school lands or royalty interests owned at the time of the distribution. Nothing in this Section affects financial aid to any school district by the state. (Added Nov. 7, 1972.)